

Stengel in sports, and John Steinbeck, Kurt Vonnegut, and the inimitable Doctor Seuss in literature claim German heritage.

Madam Speaker, I urge the House to pay tribute to this Great German American Heritage Month, to the many Americans of German descent who continue to contribute to the vitality of my State of New Jersey and to these United States of America.

#### REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE LAKE GEORGE BOATING ACCIDENT

(Mr. McCOTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my condolences to the loved ones of those who were lost in the Lake George, New York, boating accident and offer my heartfelt sympathy to those who survived.

Seven of the individuals who perished were from my hometown of Livonia: Caryl and William Gilson, Louise and Charles Greenwald, Margaret and William Nadvornik, and Marge Perry. Avid members of the Livonia Travel Club, these fine people had contributed to their community and their country as mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, veterans, volunteers, and friends and neighbors. Truly, they will all be missed.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our sorrow and offering our assistance to all involved in and affected by this tragedy.

#### CELEBRATING THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF "IT'S ACADEMIC"

(Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to and honor the 45th anniversary of the Nation's leading and longest-running educational television program, the Emmy-winning show, "It's Academic."

"It's Academic" is a nationwide, weekly high school competition that began in Washington, D.C. Since its inception 45 years ago, "It's Academic" shows have spread to other cities. During the current school year, 27 high schools in my congressional district will compete against the brightest students from public and private schools throughout the District of Columbia region. These students will be coached and encouraged by dedicated teachers and principals on a wide variety of academic subjects and the challenges of a competitive format under the television lights.

Every Saturday morning, viewers tune in to watch local high school students compete in their knowledge of math, literature, history, and current events. In many schools, students compete for the opportunity to be on the show. Not only do they enjoy the ca-

maraderie with their peers in learning challenging information and developing team skills, but they get the added bonus of being on television and performing under pressure, something many students on the football team and the drama club can simply envy.

The goals of "It's Academic" are more than showcasing intelligent students. All the students, including members of the losing teams, receive scholarship money from the corporate sponsors, which in my area has been primarily Giant Food.

In a recent editorial, The Washington Post said of the show: "Amid all the disturbing news about declining test scores and failing schools, this home-grown Saturday morning staple serves as a welcome reminder of what is right with education."

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree and look forward to the partnership between "It's Academic" and our communities and schools for many more years to come.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I request unanimous consent to assume the time of my colleague from California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

#### AVIAN FLU: WE MUST ACT NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, in the midst of a press conference this past Tuesday, President Bush responded to a question relating to a possible outbreak of avian flu here in the United States by stating that he was considering the use of the American military to enforce quarantine measures in cases of a pandemic.

While a number of public health experts and civil liberties advocates quickly criticized the President for suggesting that the military be deployed to control a flu outbreak, his public musing about the need for such

a drastic step was a strong and long overdue indication that the U.S. Government is beginning to take seriously the prospect of a flu pandemic.

For several years now, epidemiologists and public health officials have been warning of a possible global pandemic of bird flu that could rival or surpass the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic that killed as many as 50 million people worldwide. We have been fortunate that none of the existing strains of avian flu that have infected thousands of birds and some 65 people in 11 countries have mutated into a form that can spread from human to human; but that threat is real, and there is growing evidence that we do not have much time to prepare.

This week's issues of the journals Nature and Science have published the results of work done at the U.S. Armed Forces Institute of Pathology here in Maryland that shows that the 1918 Spanish flu was actually a type of bird flu and was similar to the flu now affecting Asia. The research also suggests that samples of today's avian flu have begun to develop genetic changes that may allow it to spread from person to person.

Irwin Redlener, director of the National Center For Disease Preparedness at Columbia University, recently told The New York Times that a flu epidemic was the "next big catastrophe that we can reasonably expect, and the country is phenomenally not prepared for this."

Yesterday, Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt acknowledged our lack of preparation, but seemingly tried to absolve the administration by saying that "no one in the world is ready" for a flu pandemic.

That may be true, but some countries have taken greater steps to prepare than the United States. At present we have only 2 million doses of Tamiflu, an antiviral medication that has been shown to be effective against the H5NI flu virus. The Australian Government, on the other hand, has stockpiled 3.5 million courses of treatment, while Britain has ordered enough of the drug to cover a quarter of its population.

Clearly, we are lagging behind other developed countries in preparing for an outbreak here. And as ABC's "Primetime" reported last month, the Roche Company, which produces Tamiflu, is filling orders on a first-come, first-served basis. The United States, I am sorry to say, is nowhere near the top of the list.

Quote: "Do we wish we had ordered it sooner and more of it? I suspect one would say yes," admitted Secretary Leavitt. When asked why the U.S. did not place orders for Tamiflu sooner, the Secretary told ABC: "I can't answer that. I don't know the answer to that."

The American Government has finally begun to take action to prepare to confront a pandemic. The Department of State is hosting a meeting of